construction activity is a long term activity and is spread over more than one year. Some of the unspent balance with the State is committed towards such activities. The relatively high unspent balance is therefore a systemic feature of the health sector reform agenda being undertaken under NRHM and does not necessarily reflect poor utilisation by the State.

6. The Government of India supports the States to facilitate appropriate and accelerated utilisation of funds released under NRHM. For this purpose series of workshops have also been organised to assist the States and build capacity for programme planning and implementation.

Conversion of wasteland into cultivatble land

†*6. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 17.45 per cent of land is wasteland in the country;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

(c) the area of wasteland which has been converted into agricultural land from 2006 to 2008; and

(d) the total area of wasteland targeted to be converted into cultivable land during the Eleventh Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) As per Wasteland Atlas of India, 2005, of Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, Government of India, the total area of wasteland is 55.27 million ha. which is 17.45 per cent of total geographical area of the country.

Various schemes/programmes of Watershed Development are under implementation to develop the degraded land including wasteland with the objective of preventing soil erosion, land degradation, maintaining balance in different types of land uses, increasing moisture and groundwater recharge, sustaining productivity etc. It is because of these programmes that the Net Sown Area in the country has remained approximately the same *i.e.* 141 million ha. despite increase in area under non-agricultural uses over last two decades.

Government of India has targeted an area of 32.05 million ha. for development of degraded land including wastelands under various watershed development programmes during the XI Five Year Plan.

Closure of sugar mills

*7. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of sugar has increased very fast during the last 2-3 years due to closure of sugar mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the steps Government is taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMERS AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The range of ex-mill non-levy sugar prices in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 sugar seasons in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), the two major sugar producing States in the country was as indicated below:

2005-06 sugar season

(Rs. per quintal)

State	Grade	Oct. 2005	Jan. 2006	April 2006	July 2006
U.P. (Delhi)	S-30	1775-1815	1700-1890	1850-1950	1820-1850
Maharashtra	S-30	1620-1685	1660-1780	1670-1790	1645-1700

2006-07 sugar season

(Rs. per quintal)

State	Grade	Oct. 2006	Jan. 2007	April 2007	July 2007
U.P. (Delhi)	S-30	1750-1825	1475-1575	1300-1420	1280-1320
Maharashtra	S-30	1535-1625	1320-1400	1160-1350	1140-1220

2007-08 sugar season

(Rs. per quintal)

State	Grade	Oct. 2007	Jan. 2008	April 2008	July 2008
U.P. (Delhi)	S-30	1375-1400	1370-1460	1470-1540	1450-1640
Maharashtra	S-30	1160-1205	1180-1280	1260-1350	1310-1510

SOURCE: Daily Trade Mart Inquiry, Directorate of Sugar.

The above table reveals that during the last two sugar seasons 2006-07 and 2007-08, the ex-mill prices of sugar had remained low. This was on account of high levels of sugar production achieved in these two sugar seasons. However, during the current sugar season 2008-09, the sugar prices have shown a rising trend mainly due to reports of fall in sugarcane and sugar production.

(c) The Government has taken the following steps to control rise in sugar prices during the current sugar season:-

(i) A higher quota of 50 lac tons of non-levy sugar was made available for sale in the open market for each of the two quarters of the current sugar season *viz.* October -December, 2008 and January - March, 2009 as compared to 42 lac tons and 44 lac tons made available, respectively, in the corresponding quarters of the last sugar season.

(ii) In order to increase availability of sugar in the country, the Government has allowed sugar mills to import raw sugar under Advance Authorization Scheme up to 30 09.2009 and permitted sugar factories to sell processed raw sugar in the domestic market and fulfill export obligation on 'ton-to-ton' basis within 24 months.

(iii) The system of obtaining release orders for export of sugar under Open General Category has been re-introduced with effect from 1st January, 2009.

Shortage of fertilizers in Orissa

*8. MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State of Orissa has been facing acute shortage of fertilizers and the State Government has repeatedly written/reminded the Centre for help in the matter;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the action plan of Union Government to provide the much needed fertilizers to the farmers of the State to save their crops?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) No, Sir. From time to time, the State Government writes to the Department of Fertilizers regarding availability of fertilizers and the Department takes prompt action to resolve the issues raised by the State Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The cumulative requirement, availability and sales of DAP, MOP, Complex fertilizers and Urea in the State of Orissa during the year 2008-09 (April, 2008 to January, 2009) are at Statement-I (*See* below).

Month-wise details of requirement, availability and sales of DAP, MOP, complex fertilizers and Urea in Orissa for the period April, 2008 to January 2009 are at Statement-II.

Statement-I

The cumulative requirement, availability and sales of DAP, MOP, Complex fertilizers and Urea in the State of Orissa during the year 2008-09 (April. 2008 to January, 2009)

(Figures in Lakh Metric Tonnes)

State	Product	Requirement	Availability	Sales to State agency / dealers/ stockists
Orissa	DAP	1.67	1.76	1.76
	MOP	1.15	1.24	1.18
	Complex	2.50	2.61	2.48
	Urea	4.60	4.07	3.92